

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2910
By: Branch
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In order to ensure economic competitiveness and individual opportunity, Texas needs to increase the number of its students who graduate with a postsecondary degree or credential. According to interested parties, private sector entities are exploring opportunities for a public-private partnership that will build on existing efforts and bring greater coordination to increasing graduation rates at state postsecondary institutions. H.B. 2910 seeks to further such goals by granting the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in partnership with institutions of higher education, the authority to enter into agreements with certain organizations for the purpose of increasing degree completion rates.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2910 amends the Education Code to authorize the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in partnership with an institution of higher education, to enter into an agreement with a nonprofit organization to assist the board in identifying and implementing effective methods for increasing degree completion rates at an institution of higher education, including by the following methods:

- identifying and promoting innovative models, emerging technology platforms, and best practices for increasing degree completion rates in areas including developmental education, financial assistance, student support services, and transfer or articulation agreements;
- providing data, research, and evaluation support to assist the board in assessing the effectiveness of pilot programs in increasing degree completion rates;
- coordinating ongoing local, state, federal, and philanthropic initiatives to increase degree completion rates; and
- determining the extent of implementation of degree completion rate improvement models across a region or the state and the effectiveness of the models as student population increases.

The bill authorizes the coordinating board to establish by rule a grant program to fund projects, including the award of a grant to a nonprofit organization that enters into an agreement with the coordinating board related to the improvement of degree completion rates. The bill requires the coordinating board, if it establishes such a grant program, to prescribe by rule the application procedure and criteria for awarding a grant. The bill authorizes grants awarded by the board to be funded by appropriations and gifts, grants, and other donations.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.